



Dear friends,

It has now been a year since Presidents Obama and Medvedev first met in London and expressed their commitment to a more constructive and productive US-Russian relationship. Perhaps the best assessment of their success in the following twelve months was offered by President Medvedev himself, during his most recent visit to Washington. In a discussion at the Brookings Institution, he stated that he was “glad that, over the last year, we managed to change the atmosphere of the Russian-American relationship.” I could not agree more, and of course we now see this improved atmosphere beginning to yield concrete results. I was honored to take part in the summit meeting in Prague on April 8 at which our two nations, which hold over ninety percent of the world’s nuclear weapons, signed the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) and agreed to reduce our strategic nuclear arsenals by an additional thirty percent. By honoring our commitments in the START agreement, we are sending a strong message to the rest of the world that the United States and Russia intend to lead an international effort to advance nuclear security worldwide. Just as the United States is not the only country that faces the threat of nuclear terrorism, we realize that we cannot prevent this terrible threat on our own. In recognition of this fact, the United States hosted the Nuclear Security Summit in Washington. Forty-seven nations, including Russia, participated in this summit and agreed to steps we can take together to secure nuclear material and to prevent illicit nuclear trafficking.

As a further sign of this commitment, the United States and Russia signed in Washington an agreement pledging both of our countries to irreversibly and transparently dispose of 34 tons of weapons-grade plutonium each. Together, that is enough material for nearly 17,000 nuclear weapons. The monitoring and inspections required in this agreement will guarantee that this material will never again be used for weapons or any other military purpose. Instead of the plutonium being used for weapons, it will now be used by civilian nuclear reactors to produce electricity for the benefit of our people.

In addition to nuclear security and non-proliferation, a much greater level of cooperation and consultation now exists between our two nations in many other critical areas including combating terrorism, disaster response, economic development, and forest preservation. We are working with Russia to persuade Iran to meet its international obligations regarding its nuclear program. Thanks to the U.S.–Russia air transit agreement, signed July 2009 in Moscow, more than 200 flights have transited Russian airspace, bringing much needed military supplies and

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personnel to Afghanistan, and bolstering our joint interest in stabilizing that country. In the G20, we are coordinating our macroeconomic policies to benefit growth in the global economy. And last month, representatives of law enforcement agencies of our two countries signed an agreement that will help them deal more effectively with violence against children and human trafficking.

Last July Presidents Obama and Medvedev formed the Bilateral Presidential Commission to improve communication and cooperation between our governments and our peoples. All of the Commission's sixteen working groups, which cover a wide range of issues in which we have common interest, have established contact and are undertaking joint activities. The recently established innovation dialogue, which cuts across several working groups, has broadened and strengthened ties between high-tech industries and scientific and academic institutions to foster entrepreneurship, promote "e-government," and develop the use of the social media and other communication technologies to improve educational, cultural, and public health services. As a result of last February's meeting of the Counter Narcotics Working Group, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and the Russian Federal Drug Control Service have exchanged information on several Afghan drug trafficking organizations who were responsible for sending opiate and hashish shipments from Afghanistan to Russia via Central Asia. And thanks to the efforts of the Education, Culture, Sports, and Media Working Group, later this spring there will be a youth basketball exchange.

The Business Development and Economic Relations Working Group met in Moscow in March and in April in Washington. During the meeting in Moscow, the U.S. and Russian Governments announced their intention to start discussions on business visas and work permits, signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote the growth of small and medium enterprises, and discussed proposals for cooperation in the areas of customs and investment promotion, while the U.S. Government announced that it will lead an aviation trade mission to Moscow and Ulyanovsk in October 2010. In Washington, Secretary of Commerce Locke and Minister of Economic Development Nabiullina, meeting jointly with American and Russian business leaders, as well as senior officials of both governments responsible for immigration, customs, energy efficiency, procurement, technology, and finance and trade policy, announced further initiatives to remove obstacles and increase trade and investment between our two nations.

The upcoming sixty-fifth anniversary of the defeat of fascism in Europe reminds us that the areas of agreement between our two countries are far more important and numerous than our disagreements. When our interests coincide, our joint efforts can yield impressive results. We saw proof of that in 1945, on a bridge spanning the Elbe River, and we witnessed it again just a few weeks ago, with the Russian-American handshake in Prague. I look forward to reporting to you in the upcoming editions of my newsletter on how our relationship continues to grow.

*Ambassador John Beyrle*

## Russian and U.S. Scientists Synthesize New Element



A team of Russian and American scientists has discovered a new element that has long stood as a missing link among the heaviest elements ever produced -- an element with atomic number 117. Six atoms of the new element, temporarily called "ununseptium" (117), were produced in a particle accelerator at the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research (JINR) in Dubna, Russia through the collaborative efforts of Russian scientists from the Scientific Research Institute of Atomic Reactors and of American scientists from the Oak Ridge and Livermore National Laboratories, Vanderbilt University, and the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The data collected from the discovery of this new element supports the theory that as newly created elements become heavier, they will become more stable and have greater longevity. This new element could have practical applications in nanotechnology and medicine. By scientific custom, if the

latest discovery is confirmed elsewhere, the element will receive an official name and be incorporated in the periodic table of elements -- a process which could take years.

*Photo: Heavy Ion Accelerator U-400 at JINR's Flerov Laboratory of Nuclear Reactions*

## U.S. Embassy Publicizes Return of Tsar's Medallion

The U.S. Embassy organized a press conference at the ambassador's residence to publicize the USG's return of a valuable medallion that once belonged to the family of Russia's last Tsar, Nicholas II. The medallion was stolen from the State Hermitage in St. Petersburg. It was spotted on an online auction site by the Investigative Committee of the Russian Prosecutor's Office, who then worked with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to recover the medallion. The press conference was attended by 13 broadcast media outlets and 11 print outlets representing both Russian and Western media. The medallion's return was also featured on Yahoo!'s home page and carried on CNN. Thanks to the press conference, ongoing cooperation between U.S. and Russian law enforcement agencies, a previously little-known success in our relationship, was literally headline news around the world.



*Photo: The Ambassador with the Head of the Russian Cultural Preservation Agency and a representative from the Prosecutor's Office*

## U.S. Russia Innovation Dialogue Generates Ideas in Support of the Commission

The first U.S.-Russia Innovation Dialogue took place in Moscow and Novosibirsk February 17-22. The purpose of the dialogue was to leverage our shared innovative capacity to generate ideas in support of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission. Co-led by Howard Solomon from the National Security Council and by Jared Cohen from the Secretary of State's Policy Planning Staff, the delegation included CEOs and CTOs from major technology companies, such as eBay, Cisco, Mozilla, EDventure, Howcast, Twitter, Social Gaming Network, Katalyst, and the New York Academy of Sciences. Also on the delegation was the U.S. Chief Technology Officer, Aneesh Chopra. The delegation met with federal and regional officials, civil society actors, educators and students, and entrepreneurs. The focus of the visit was on promoting better governance, combating corruption and trafficking in persons, improving healthcare, and expanding educational opportunities for youth and teachers. The visit generated ideas in support of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission and illustrated President Obama's dual track strategy of engaging both governments and societies. The delegation proposed projects for immediate collaboration in the following areas: education, entrepreneurship training, and mentorship; anti-trafficking and child protection; combating cyber-crime; health; e-governance and collaboration; and promoting cultural collaboration.



*Photo: Delegation visiting Gymnasium #10 in Novosibirsk, delegation member Ashton Kutcher speaking*

## World-Renowned American Violinist Performs at Tchaikovsky Hall



With support from the U.S. Embassy, world-famous American violinist Sarah Chang performed at Tchaikovsky Hall, thrilling a capacity audience of 1,500. Ms. Chang also performed in St. Petersburg and gave an interview to the national Kultura TV channel. The concert was organized under the auspices of the U.S.-Russia Bilateral Presidential Commission.

*Photo: Violinist Sarah Chang with pianist Andrew von Oeyen at Tchaikovsky Hall in Moscow*



## Ambassador Beyrle Thanks Polar Convoy Veterans for Their Service

During a special holiday event hosted by St. Petersburg Consul General Sheila Gwaltney at her residence on



December 21, U.S. Ambassador John Beyrle thanked surviving Soviet Navy veterans for their work protecting U.S. Merchant Marine sailors and ships delivering Lend Lease supplies to Murmansk and Archangel on the Polar Convoy route. The day kicked off with a launching of the Russian-language translation of Mark Scott's Eyewitness Accounts of the WWII Murmansk Run, 1941-1945 and concluded with a formal sit down meal featuring a vintage WWII-era menu including: Cream of Tomato Soup, Grilled Hawaiian SPAM Steaks with Pineapple and Scalloped Potatoes, and Apple Brown Betty.

*Photo: Ambassador Beyrle surrounded by Polar Convoy veterans and their friends*

## USAID Signs Agreement with U.S. Forest Service and Russian Federal Forest Agency to Protect World's Largest Forests

Under the framework of the U.S.–Russia Bilateral Forestry Working Group, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) signed in December a Protocol of Intent with the U.S. Forest Service and the Russian Federal Forest Agency (RFFA) to protect the world's largest expanse of forest, including initiatives that will support the efforts of the United States and Russia to reduce global climate change. The Protocol provides an outline to strengthen collaboration in the sustainable management of forests through 2013 in such critical areas as forest monitoring and inventory, fire prevention, pest and disease management, illegal



logging, and voluntary forest certification. In March representatives of USAID and the RFFA met in Moscow to discuss next steps in cooperation, including the development of a work plan for joint activities in 2010.

*Photo: Meeting of Representatives of USAID, RFFA and the Embassy's Foreign Agricultural Service at the Russian Federal Forest Agency in Moscow*